

## LADIES'-MAIDS OF THE EAST.

By L. PIERSON.



**I**N my many journeyings through the world, the first experience I ever had of an Oriental maid was one "Bargoum" a Persian. So few in number were the English ladies who had visited Persia when I first made my home there, that the demand for them was small, and the supply so extremely limited that it was difficult, indeed almost impossible, to find a respectable waiting-maid of any description, much less one skilled in the art of attending upon a lady.

After endless inquiries, inexhaustible patience and a prolonged search there was one day ushered into my presence by the "nazir" (head man-servant) a veiled and mysterious figure. I must explain that the "nazir" undertakes to engage and dismiss all servants in this country, so that be they men or women they are all under his surveillance. She was veiled from top to toe in a long blue cotton sheet, which she drew closely around her, leaving nothing but her eyes and feet uncovered. The head-servant knowing a little English announced her with a low bow saying, "Khanum" (lady), "here is a woman I have bring to attend upon your person, she very good, very good, you will find she do everything you require."

This somewhat sudden introduction took me a little by surprise, and I felt no inclination to take into my service a creature with so vague a character and personal appearance. It seemed however to be the custom, and as I also understood her to be a treasure it would not on any account do to lose, I gave ear to the matter and put to her the few following questions.

"How old are you?"

She shook her head but was mute, to which question the "nazir" replied with a Parisian shrug of the shoulders, "Who can tell! she may be twenty years, perhaps more, perhaps less."

"Are you a good needlewoman?" I inquired.

"Oh yes," was his answer, "she make sew the cloth very well." In despair of receiving any answer from the motionless figure before me I addressed myself to the nazir.

"Can she wash fine handkerchiefs and laces?"

"Why should she not?" was the reply.

"In whose service has she latterly been?" I inquired in my innocence, at which a smile seemed to play over her hitherto expressionless eyes, for the idea of ever having been a maid to anyone before evidently amused her.

"Oh, that is quite little matter," exclaimed my nazir, growing restless, "we think nothing of this in our country; in the name of the prophet she can do all you wish."

So this wonderful apparition was engaged at the rate of twelve pounds a year, much to the delight of her representative, into whose pocket some few coppers would find their way each month as her wages became due for having procured her the situation.

Labour is cheap in the "land of the lion and the sun," but even at this low rate of wage my rather picturesque attendant proved costly in the extreme. She broke almost every ornament in my bed-room, that had

stood the wear and tear of a rough journey from London to Teheran, in but the course of a few days; my handkerchiefs were torn, she spilt ink upon the beautiful Persian carpets, and wherever she passed she left a most noxious odour of tobacco-smoke and garlic behind her.

Bargoum served from left to right like all Persians, and continued inconveniently to reverse matters, by tacking collars into one's gowns with the band upwards, by which contrivance the collar itself was carefully concealed and the band exposed to view. She had no respect for old laces, treating them also in the same ruthless manner. Each time that this feat was accomplished she would bring her needlework to me with an air of great satisfaction exclaiming "See, khanum, see, it is very well this time!"

Most of her spare hours were spent in smoking the khalian (water pipe) and gossiping with one of the washerwomen who usually work under a washerman, until over some trivial matter a deadly feud sprang up between the friends and a terrible battle ensued near to the drawing-room windows 'neath the shade of the walnut trees. They began by hurling large stones at one another, but it soon became a hand-to-hand fight; they tore one another's garments into shreds, they scratched each other's faces with their long finger-nails until the blood trickled down their necks and shoulders and clotted their long, swarthy, clammy hair, they kicked, they screamed, and had not utter exhaustion compelled them to part they must to a surety have killed each other.

The immaculate "Bargoum" therefore was despatched at a short notice, and was replaced after some weeks by a quiet person of dignified mien with long and languishing soft brown eyes. "Jutti" was her name, and like most Orientals, however lowly bred, possessed small and delicately-shaped hands and feet, which tinkled as she walked with a variety of silver ornaments. On entering a room her most constant habit was to turn the key instead of the handle of the door as she closed it, in consequence of which she spent several hours while in my service seated upon the floor with her head resting upon her knees, listening and waiting for someone to pass who might hear her calls and free her from her difficulties by explaining from the outside how she must turn the key back before the door would open.

Often as this occurred, it seemed ever to dawn upon her as quite a new idea, so that the instructions were always received with the same expressions of intense astonishment. During such emergencies if she saw me in the garden below with friends, she would, regardless of any sort of delicacy, rattle at the windows, knock on the glass, and as a last resource thrust out her head and scream, "Khanum, khanum, let me out, come up and let me out, the door has in some manner become closed and cannot be opened!" "Jutti" remained nearly a year with me and left suddenly, overwhelmed to all appearances by the most heartrending grief, which I was told was caused by the death of her mother.

She was an excellent actress indeed!

When she left, furs, gloves, handkerchiefs, and many other useful articles had also disappeared, and like the thief were never seen or heard of again.

Where are the police, will naturally be asked, and I can but reply that the police were cast in much the same mould.

Several things of value therefore found their way into the bazaars at that time, one of which was an exquisite and costly travelling clock that had been, the evening before, sold much under its value. The following day it was of course up for sale again at treble the price that the purchaser had given for it, and was rapidly purchased and carried off by some of the Persian royal household, who were all attracted by its beauty and its tone.

Some few weeks after this unwelcome event, one, with whom I was acquainted, chanced to be making a visit at the palace of the Shah, when the new possession was brought out and exhibited by the Princess of the Anderun (Harem) with the most child-like glee and excitement. "Hush!" they cried as they, and their waiting-maids, and children, gathered round it. "Hush! and you will hear it speak!"

They were deeply grieved to part with their lately acquired treasure, but when they heard its history they most willingly returned it to its owner.

Although its striking powers had been heavily taxed during the few weeks that it was in the palace the little clock was in no wise seriously injured, and as I write still goes calmly on, bringing to my remembrance the long lapse of time that has passed since these adventures occurred in its life and mine.

The Indian ayah is as a rule too well known to need much comment. She has had very many more opportunities of becoming an efficient maid than her Persian sister, although with but few exceptions there is a great deal in her still to be desired. Several came into my service, who, if not dishonest, were in many other ways unsatisfactory, but I have only space to give two strikingly opposite instances.

On my first arrival in Calcutta I had learnt a few words of Hindostani, but those few were so hopelessly false in pronunciation that no one would be likely to understand them, so an ayah was promptly procured for me who could speak "the English." She salaamed to the ground on coming into my presence, and produced without delay from a muslin wrapper numerous chits (notes or written characters) of a most excellent tone. The latest in date however was unfortunately, she informed me, written by a lady who had that very day sailed for England, as the "chit" also notified, for several years. In my innocence I engaged her, and her first duty, while I was from home was to unpack countless possessions brought from London and Paris. On my return I went with the ayah to inspect the contents of the cases she had opened, when to my untold dismay numberless things were missing! in particular rolls of materials as yet unmade up.

I questioned her narrowly concerning them, and at length accused her of having been the thief, but she wept and moaned bitterly at the suggestion, and throwing herself at my feet, "Oh! protector of the poor," she exclaimed, "with all my good chits how you think I do this thing!" Finding that this had little effect, however, she rose, and folding her hands across her breast in a saint-like attitude she turned her eyes up to the ceiling and exclaimed "Memsahib" (mistress), "heaven only know where they got. Hum Christian hai" (I am a Christian).

After her flight, for she vanished that evening, I was told she had been seen by some of the men-servants in my absence to leave the house with several bundles, which, on

inquiry, she replied were clothes for the washerman; needless to say her chits were forgeries, or perchance might have been sold to her by another of the same name, which is a not uncommon trick.

For the last ayah who came into my service what can be said enough in praise of her faithfulness! Night or day in the bitter snowy weather of the hills, or 'neath the scorching sun of the Indian plains, early or late, in anxiety or sickness, she was always willing, always cheerful, and ever at hand to attend upon her mistress; her devotion was so deeply rooted that nothing could sever it. She was an intelligent woman also, and sometimes would talk to me upon her ideas of religion.

"Listen, memsahib," she would say, "my religion is this, I avoid all I can that I think is wrong, and I try to do what seems to me to be right. I believe that the great Allah (God) is good and merciful, that he sees me and knows all that I do, and that he will not forget me in another life. Is not this sufficient? Memsahib, if you had always been brought up in one religion, ever since you were old enough to understand, would you not believe it was the right one, and would you change it for another?"

I was greatly attached to her as she to me, and felt the parting with her deeply, although it had to be, when I returned to England.

Some days before I left India she inquired of me in a quavering voice, "Memsahib, what

day is it that you have arranged to make your journey, and at what hour in the day?"

When I told her the probable date she burst into tears and exclaimed, "Oh, memsahib, I shall never find another mistress like you, no, never again wherever I go," and she knelt down and kissed my feet while the tears poured over her dusky cheeks.

"You will not find me anywhere the day you leave, memsahib, everything you need shall be in readiness, but no one will find me, I shall be gone! I cannot stay, dear lady, to wish you good-bye."

She spoke truly, this faithful friend, for when the hour came for my departure all was arranged, but she was nowhere to be found, nor have I ever heard of her since.



## THE GOAT AS A PET FOR GIRLS.

### PART III.

HAVING treated of rearing and feeding a goat, the present paper will be devoted to the subject of keeping our favourite under the best conditions for its own and its mistress's comfort and enjoyment. There are certainly few pets that can be more easily kept free from all drawbacks of evil odour and other sanitary objections than the one under consideration, provided always that the arrangements are such as to allow of a due regard to the drainage and sanitation of the house or shed in which the animal will have to pass many hours of its existence. Thus the most important detail of goat-keeping will be the proper construction of the goat-house.

To achieve the most perfect cleanliness it will be found best to keep the goat tied up in a miniature stall, as thus all the manure drops upon one spot, and can be readily cleared up and removed, instead of soiling the whole area of the apartment.

In a stall two feet wide the goat will contentedly pass the nights in summer, and many of the days in rough weather in winter.

In Switzerland the goats are all housed in November, and do not go out of doors again until the mountain snows begin to leave the pastures; the amount of space allotted to each during the winter being very small indeed. In painful contrast with their summer life upon the free and breezy mountain-pastures must be these weary months passed in the crowded stuffy cow-house, and yet the animals do not seem to suffer by the confinement.

A goat that is to supply any milk in winter cannot be kept too warm. Energy that is employed in keeping out the cold must be drawn from that which would have been available for milk-production, and, moreover, goats much exposed to cold, naturally grow a coarse and long coat, which spoils their appearance, and renders them more apt to be dirty and offensive. The goat's stall, there-

fore, should be fitted up in a warm stable or shed, the most important consideration being free and ample drainage, for with this condition and with the bedding I am about to describe, the stall can be kept absolutely free from any offensive odour.

In my book, before referred to, I have given a description of the bedding I adopt for my own goats, and which I have found most successful. It consists of a wooden frame, three feet long by two feet wide, upon which are nailed strips of wood about two inches wide, and with spaces of an inch between each. This frame is raised upon iron legs about eighteen inches from the ground, so that broom and mop may be freely used upon the paving beneath. During the day, when the goat is out, the bed can be washed down and put in the fresh air to sweeten, and thus perfect cleanliness may be ensured.

In summer the goat will rest comfortably upon her wooden bed, but in winter a sprinkling of clean straw will add to her warmth and comfort.

The sides of the stalls should be about three feet high and sloping towards the rear, but such details may best be adapted to the space and position available. The fastening-chain should be very short, about six inches, and sliding upon a bar, to allow the goat to stand or lie down. If the chain is any longer the goat will turn herself round in her stall, and thus evade the sanitary arrangements made for her. A rack for hay or grass, and a manger for corn or acorns, will be necessary fittings, and they will require to be kept scrupulously clean. An excellent manger is to be made by dropping an ordinary galvanised pail into a hole in a board, and this arrangement certainly facilitates cleaning, but when chopped roots are given, as they should be in winter, I think there is some danger of the roots acting upon the metal and producing unwholesome results, and for this reason I have discarded the pails in favour of wooden mangers. The edge of the manger should be

eighteen or nineteen inches from the floor or bed upon which the goat stands.

Grooming is an operation that a well-bred, sleek-coated goat will well repay, and the art may best be acquired by noting how it is performed upon a horse, though the general health and condition of the animal will have more effect upon the gloss of its coat than any quantity of labour expended in brushing.

The task of milking a favourite goat is far from being an arduous one, and may soon be learnt by a fairly neat-handed person. The teat must be firmly grasped and the forefinger and thumb so placed that the milk cannot flow back into the udder, the second, third, and fourth fingers are then brought to bear successively to press the milk down and keep it flowing in a steady stream until the teat is empty, when the grasp of the forefinger is relaxed to allow a fresh flow of milk from the udder to be in its turn pressed downwards until every drop has been withdrawn.

A beginner will find the operation easiest when half the milk has been already taken, a full, tight udder being often very difficult to manipulate.

Milking should be performed as nearly as possible every twelve hours, and not oftener. A young goat has sometimes considerable trouble and difficulty in retaining the milk so long, and at first a portion may run away, but the capacity of the udder soon becomes equal to the requirements, and after the first week little inconvenience will be noticed.

Very little training will induce a goat to go in harness provided it is already a gentle and tractable animal, and children who possess a goat usually sooner or later try its paces in some sort of vehicle. For this purpose an ordinary mail-cart can soon be adapted. But to pursue the subject further I should exceed my allotted space, and I must therefore bring my remarks to a close, only hoping that I have said enough to show that the goat may very efficiently fulfil the office of "a pet for girls."